

St John's Allotment Association 1983

AGM Minutes – 11 May 2023

The 2023 Annual General Meeting of St John's Allotment Association 1983 took place at the Sports and Social Club, Upper Rosemary Hill, Kenilworth on Thursday 11 May 2023 at 7.30 pm.

Present;

Bob Shanks (Chair)	Chris Othen
Arthur Belgrove (Plot Secretary)	Ken Chennells
Ruth Harris (Treasurer)	Janet Bates
Chris Jordan	Steve Essex
Terry Cripps	Mike Skinner
Matt Johnson	Helen Essex
Tanya Webber	Adrian Jones
George Kirkwood	David Marr
Stella Allinson	Tobias Grafke
Nigel Garner	Toni Hickman
Rhoda Bedington	John Parkes
Vicky Robinson	Garry Warren
Meg Bowen	Julie Scanlan
Catherine Dallaway	Jurgita Liutuevicuite
Krishnan Thirumalai	Kelly Lucas

Apologies

Olivia Clinton Carter	Karen Knight
Jeanette Partridge	Jane Baker
Philip Gallaway	Norman White
Michael Bunney	Stuart Williams
Mark Williams	Paul Thomason
Elaine Bourton	Peter Spencer
Rosemary Spencer	

Minutes

The minutes of the previous AGM had been circulated prior to the meeting and were taken as read.

Proposition: That the minutes be accepted as a true record of the 2022 AGM. Proposed by Chris Jordan, seconded by Mike Skinner and passed unanimously.

Chairman's Report

Bob said that previous calls for more volunteers to help with the running of the allotments had gone unheeded and that the Association could not continue as it is without help from additional volunteers. If no-one came forward then outside paid help would need to be bought in which would change the nature of the Association, which had always been self-governed by volunteers. The employment of contractors would also result in a significant rise in rents. He asked for the views of the members as to how we might proceed.

The split of the major roles was outlined, but it was felt that members might be reluctant to take on a role without knowing how it would work out, or how much of a commitment it would be. After a discussion it was agreed that a further meeting would take place, to which everyone interested in volunteering would be invited to try to devise a way forward. It was later agreed that this would be on Thursday, 18 May at the Sports and Social Club at 7.30 pm.

Election of Officers

One committee member, Ken Chennells, was up for re-election.

Proposition: that Ken Chennells be re-elected to the committee for a 3 year term.

Proposed by Jan Brown, and seconded by Ruth Harris. All in favour

Plot Secretary's Report

This had been circulated prior to the meeting. The idea was floated that we might appoint a Social Secretary to encourage more member participation in the Association. Previous attempts had not been successful. It was also noted that attendance at Allotment Show was down on previous events

Site Secretary's Report

This had been circulated prior to the meeting. There is currently no Site Secretary in post with essential tasks being carried out by Arthur and Ruth, significantly increasing their workload. If the post cannot be filled, then it can be broken down into smaller parts, but co-ordination will be needed.

The problem of rubbish on plots was highlighted, and members were asked to take their rubbish home, as skips would only be available for larger items by agreement with the committee. Skips are too costly for small items which can readily be taken off site.

Treasurer's Report and Accounts

These had been circulated prior to the meeting. Ruth said that the auditor had signed off the accounts. At year end, we had over £7,000 in the bank, and we are in a strong financial position. With the recent rent payments at increased rates, we had in excess of £10,000 at present, and the large cash balance was needed in view of the uncertainty surrounding the proposed development of adjacent land.

Proposition –that the committee be given discretion to increase the rents up to a maximum of £10 for 2024 should they think it necessary. The implications of this were explained in detail by Ruth and Bob. Proposed by Ruth Harris and seconded by Bob Shanks. All in favour.

Bob explained that the new Town Plan showed housing development adjacent to two of our boundaries, and in the event of action we may need to take legal advice and strengthen our boundaries, both likely to be expensive. A cycle path along Gypsy Lane is shown, but the Council say this is a 'wish list' item and unlikely to happen because of the unknown ownership of the lane. The development of the school site does not appear to affect us adversely, and indeed gives us an additional catchment for new tenants as the properties will have small gardens.

Appointment of Auditor

Diana Sandercock has agreed to continue as auditor.

Health and Safety Report

This was circulated prior to the meeting, and was read out by Ruth who, with Arthur, had acted as Health and Safety Officer as this was one of the vacancies. This is an important role, as failure to meet our statutory obligations would land us in trouble.

There were no health and safety incidents or issues during the year.

Plot Inspections

These are being organised by Jane Baker and will take place on 30 April and 25 June. On the first inspection we expect to see ground mostly prepared for planting, and for planting to

have begun. On the second we expect to see the ground fully prepared and mostly planted. We also expect to see little rubbish and weeds under control.

Any Other Business

Arthur said that as the demand for allotments was high, he had requests from people from Coventry to be put on the waiting list, and asked if this was appropriate bearing in mind the Association was initially for people in the St John's Kenilworth parish. The Constitution says that we are for people in 'Kenilworth and the surrounding area', which can be interpreted as including Coventry, certainly south Coventry. Ruth pointed out that members would need to attend the site very frequently in the growing season, which would be a problem for people living a few miles away. It was suggested that each case be considered on its merit. We have a number of members who originally lived locally but have since moved away, and still manage to tend plots successfully.

Arthur also said that a resident of Towers Close was raising money for a cover for a defibrillator to be sited outside the football club. This might be beneficial to us. The football club was providing the defibrillator, and the residents the cover.

Proposition: that the Association contribute £50 toward the cost of the installation.

Proposed by A Belgrove, seconded by C Othen. All in favour.

Gate

Our tenancy agreement says that members must keep the gate closed. When covid came it was thought safer to keep it open to avoid contamination through use of the handle. Now that covid is less of a problem, should we keep the gate closed, to deter those taking a summer evening stroll and petty thieves.

Ken Chennells said there was little point in having a rules which could not be enforced as is the case with this one.

Proposition: that the gate be kept closed. Proposed by A Hickman and seconded by M Johnson: Majority in favour

Footballs

We will meet with the football club to agree the protocol on collection of footballs which come on to the allotments. There is an FA rule on this.

Gypsy Lane

We plan to hold a meeting with the football club to arrange a working party for repairs. They feel that they have spent a lot on roadstone, and are now looking to us to contribute. Our idea is to have some bags of roadstone dropped along the lane to be used to fill in holes in collaboration with the club. Warwick District Council will not do anything to the road as its ownership is unknown.

Thefts two years ago

Nothing has been recovered. We were touch with the Rural Crime Officer some time ago.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm.